

Message Text

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71

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 ACDA-19 INT-08 COME-00 TRSE-00

PC-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14

AGR-20 SCEM-02 OMB-01 XMB-07 OPIC-12 DRC-01 /215 W

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R 111444Z DEC 73

FM AMCONSUL KADUNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2581

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT

SUBJ: GOWON VISITS DROUGHT STRICKEN AREAS

1. SUMMARY

GOWON VISIT TO DROUGHT STRICKEN AREAS DEC 7 TO 11 CONSTITUTES
OFFICIAL FMG
RECOGNITION SEVERITY OF DROUGHT SITUATION NORTHERNMOST REACHES
OF NIGERIA. VISIT, WHICH SITUATION DEFINITELY DEMANDED, SHOULD
PROVIDE IMPETUS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE NORTH. ONE
SIDE EFFECT IS INCREASED POTENTIAL U.S. AGRO-INDUSTRY SALES.
END SUMMARY.

2. FMG CAPACITY FOR IGNORING BUDDING PROBLEMS UNTIL FULLY
BLOOMED IS NO LESS DEVELOPED THAN OTHER GOVERNMENTS. IT
HAS BEEN COMMON KNOWLEDGE IN NORTH THAT EFFECT OF LIGHT AND UN-
EVEN RAINS FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR WOULD BE SERIOUS, PER-
HAPS DISASTROUS. BY MID-SEPTEMBER STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS,
WHILE HOPING FOR LAST MINUTE REPRIEVE BY FORTUITOUS LATE
RAIN, WERE MAKING DIRE PREDICATIONS CONCERNING VITAL FOOD AND
MONEY CROPS.

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3. WORST FEARS HAVE BEEN REALIZED. IN THE EXTREME NORTHERN BELT
OF NIGERIA, GROUNDNUT, GUINEA CORN, MILLET, BEAN, RICE AND OTHER

CROPS HAVE BEEN DEVASATED. CROP DAMAGE IN KANO EMIRATE ALONE ESTIMATED AT OVER 60 MILLION DOLLARS. IN FACT, DAMAGE TO ANIMAL AND CROP RESOURCES PROBABLY INESTIMABLE. CONDITIONS EXACERBATED IN NORTHEASTERN STATE BY LOCUSTS AND IN OTHER AREAS BY DRIED UP BORE HOLES AND STREAMS.

4. GOWON, AS RESPONSIBLE LEADER, COULD HARDLY DELAY ANY LONGER VISITING DROUGHT AREAS. ENERVATED BY RAMADAN IN OCTOBER AND CONSUMED BY FRENETIC CENSUS ACTIVITY IN NOVEMBER, STATE OFFICIALS INCLUDING MILITARY GOVERNORS NOW HAVE BEEN STRUCK FULL FORCE WITH REALITY OF SITUATION. NORTH CENTRAL STATE GOVERNOR BRIGADIER KYARI ADMITTED IN RECENT CONVERSATION THAT HE HAD NOT FULLY APPRECIATED SEVERITY OF DROUGHT TILL HIS RECENT TOUR. KYARI AND OTHER MILITARY GOVERNORS, WHO HAVE RECENTLY GONE PUBLIC ON DROUGHT SITUATION, PROBABLY

PRESSED GOWON TO MAKE PERSONAL VISIT. NATIONAL ATTENTION ALREADY FOCUSED ON DROUGHT THROUGH NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY MILITARY GOVERNORS OF Affected STATES. GOWON VISIT WILL SERVE TO SHOW

CONCERN OF FMG FOR THOSE SUFFERING IN AFFLICTED AREAS AND WILL, OF COURSE, NOT IMPAIR HIS ALREADY SPARKLING PUBLIC IMAGE JUST IN CASE HE MAY HAVE SOMETHING BESIDES A MILITARY CAREER IN MIND FOR THE FUTURE. CONVERSELY, FAILURE TO INVOLVE HIMSELF PERSONALLY IN PROBLEM OF THIS DIMENSION COULD HAVE TARNISHED HIS REPUTATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE STATE GOVERNORS FLATLY CLAIMED DROUGHT AS NATIONAL AND NOT MERELY LOCAL CRISIS.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.

THERE HAS BEEN AS YET NO HINT THAT NIGERIA INTENDS LOOK OUTWARD FOR DROUGHT RELIEF NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY SUGGESTION IN MEDIA THAT IT SHOULD. NATIONAL PRIDE WILL PROBABLY DICTATE THAT PROBLEM CONTINUE TO BE HANDLED INTERNALLY. U.S. BENEFITS TO EXTENT NIGERIA TAKES CARE OF ITS OWN. AS PRIMARY SUPPLIER OF RELIEF TO DROUGHT

STRICKEN AREAS IN AFRICA, WE MIGHT FIND IT AWKWARD TO REFUSE SHARE FOOD RESOURCES WITH IMPORTANT PETROLEUM SUPPLIERS. GOWON VISIT SHOULD GIVE ADDED IMPETUS TO NASCENT PLANS FOR NEW PRODUCTION COMPANIES, WATER PROJECTS AND SUCH AMBITIOUS UNDERTAKINGS AS THE CHAD BASIN

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AND RIMA VALLEY SCHEMES. INCREASED FOCUS ON AGRICULTURAL AND WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT BEARS DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO U.S. COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL THESE AREAS.

TRAIL

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